

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CLEAN AIR PLANNING ACT

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I want my Senate colleagues to know I have decided to join Senators CARPER, CHAFEE, and GREGG as cosponsors of the Clean Air Planning Act. I have studied major clean air proposals before the Senate and have concluded that this legislation is the best balanced proposal because it would reduce pollution emitted by powerplants while permitting the maximum possible economic growth and energy efficiency. I hope other colleagues will come to the same conclusion as the debate about how to clean America's air becomes front and center.

Cleaner air should be the urgent business before the Senate. The condition of the air in my State of Tennessee is completely unacceptable to me and ought to be completely unacceptable to every Tennessee citizen.

My home is 2 miles from the boundary of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park, which has also become the Nation's most polluted national park. Only Los Angeles and Houston have higher ozone levels than the Great Smokies. Only a few miles away from the Great Smokies is Knoxville, which is on the American Lung Association's list of top 10 cities with the dirtiest air. Memphis and Nashville—our two largest cities—are on the top 20 list. Chattanooga barely escapes the top 25 list.

This polluted air is damaging to health, especially that of the elderly, small children, and the disabled. It ruins the scenic beauty of our State, which is what most of us who grew up in Tennessee are proudest of. And it is damaging to our economic growth.

Clean air is the No. 1 priority of the Pigeon Forge Chamber of Commerce. Business leaders there at the foot of the Smokies know that visitors are not going to drive 300 miles and spend their tourism dollars to see smoggy mountains.

The mayors of our major cities in Tennessee also understand that cleaner air means better jobs. They know that if our metropolitan areas are not able to meet Federal standards for clean air, new restrictions will make it harder for auto parts suppliers and other industries to expand and bring good new jobs into our State. The mayors also know our cities cannot comply with the Federal standards without some help. Tennessee's clean air problem requires a national solution.

Much of our air pollution is our State's own doing—specifically, that which comes from emissions from cars and trucks and from the coal powerplants of the Tennessee Valley Authority. But as much as a third of our air pollution comes from outside Tennessee. Winds blow pollution south from the industrial Midwest and north from the South toward the highest mountain range in the eastern United States, the Great Smokies. And when the wind gets to the mountains, the pollution just hangs there, which is an additional reason the Great Smokies and the Knoxville metropolitan area have such a problem.

There are three major clean air proposals before the Senate. I have studied each to determine which would be the best for Tennessee and for our Nation.

The most important of these is President Bush's Clear Skies legislation. The President deserves great credit for putting clean air at the top of the agenda, as only a President can do, because his proposal relies upon market forces instead of excessive regulation. It limits costly litigation and creates certainty.

In addition, the President's proposal would take significant steps forward in reducing sulfur, nitrogen, and mercury pollutants.

Last year, during my campaign for the Senate, I made clean air a priority and often said the President's proposal is an excellent framework upon which to build meaningful clean air legislation but that it does not go far enough, fast enough to solve Tennessee's problems. The Clear Skies legislation is a good start, but it does not go far enough, fast enough in my back yard.

I believe the Clean Air Planning Act, which I am cosponsoring, is the best proposal for Tennessee and for our Nation. Here are the reasons:

First, the Clean Air Planning Act adopts the market-based framework of the President's proposal so that it also reduces regulation, litigation, and creates certainty.

Second, it would take our country farther faster in reducing three major pollutants: sulfur, nitrogen, and mercury.

Third, it extends its market-based framework of regulation to carbon dioxide with a modest requirement that by 2013 the carbon emitted by powerplants would be at 2001 levels, causing a 3- to 5-percent reduction in the overall United States projected level in 2013.

Fourth, the Clean Air Planning Act, of which I am a cosponsor, does not weaken existing laws in important ways that the Clear Skies proposal would. Here are the two ways the Clear Skies proposal does that:

First, Clear Skies would prevent Tennessee, for 10 years, from going in to court to force another State to meet the Federal clean air standards. Since pollutants blowing in from other States is one of our greatest problems, this is a legal right we do not want to give up.

Second, the Clear Skies proposals would remove the right of the National Park Service to comment on the effect of powerplant emissions more than 30 miles away from a national park. Again, since much of the pollution in the Smokies is blown in from more than 30 miles away, this is a review that ought to be considered.

While the President's proposal, in my judgment, does not go far enough, the other major proposal before this Senate goes too far too fast. It is a proposal by Senator JEFFORDS, the Clean Power Act, which requires carbon emissions of the utilities sector to be at 1990 levels by the time we reach the year 2009.

I believe this proposal would cost so much to implement that it would drive up the cost of electricity and drive offshore thousands of good jobs. It would significantly damage our economy and our future.

There is also the Climate Stewardship Act sponsored by Senators MCCAIN and LIEBERMAN which would regulate carbon emissions produced by the entire economy and does so on a very rapid timetable.

I would not support these two proposals because I am not convinced they are based upon good science. It would be foolish to take huge, expensive steps to solve problems which we do not know exist. But it is also unwise to completely ignore what we do know.

My reading of the Report of the National Academy of Sciences on Global Warming and my discussion with scientists, especially those at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, have persuaded me that some additional steps must be taken to limit carbon dioxide emissions.

The Senate is working on clean air legislation that will likely govern our production of energy and the accompanying pollution for the next 10 to 15 years. It would be unwise to do nothing, just as it would be unwise to do too much.

The President himself has recognized the seriousness of problems with carbon emissions and has initiated a voluntary program of emission reduction which is having some success. But for the next 10 to 15 years, I believe we should take the next step and institute modest, market-based caps.

It is important to recognize that our Clean Air Planning Act applies only to carbon produced by powerplants, not that produced by the entire economy. In fact, it would permit powerplants to purchase credits from other sectors of the economy which can prove to be a substantial benefit and income for agriculture.

There is still much to learn about the effect of human activity on global warming, specifically that caused by the production of carbon dioxide. I will continue to monitor the science as it is presented and make my judgment at the time based upon what I believe to be good science.